**Amendments to the Claims:**

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

**Listing of Claims:**

1. (Currently Amended) A rechargeable battery comprising:

a housing having a housing wall;

at least one cell in the housing;

a contact element electrically connected to the at least one cell; and

a plastic sealing element ~~extrusion-coated~~ provided on the contact element, the sealing element comprising a supporting surface which lies flat against the housing wall at an interface and a second surface extending at substantially a right angle to the supporting surface; the supporting surface and the second surface of the sealing element in contact with the housing wall such that there is no open space between the sealing element and the housing wall;

~~wherein the supporting surface is transmission laser-welded to the housing wall at the interface; and~~

wherein one of the supporting surface and the housing wall is at least partially transparent for a laser beam and the other of the supporting surface and the housing wall is absorbent for the laser beam.

2. (Original) The rechargeable battery of Claim 1, wherein the contact element is a pole bolt that extends through the housing wall.

3. (Previously Presented) The rechargeable battery of Claim 2, wherein the pole bolt comprises circumferential projections.

4. (Original) The rechargeable battery of Claim 1, wherein the contact element is a cell connector that connects a first cell to a second cell.

5. (Original) The rechargeable battery of Claim 1, wherein the housing wall is at least partially transparent for the laser beam and the supporting surface is absorbent for the laser beam.

6. (Original) The rechargeable battery of Claim 1, wherein the supporting surface is at least partially transparent for the laser beam and the housing wall is absorbent for the laser beam.

7. (Original) The rechargeable battery of Claim 1, wherein the interface between the supporting surface and the housing wall comprises a weld bead that is circumferential around the contact element.

8. (Original) The rechargeable battery of Claim 1, wherein the contact element has a circumference and comprises circumferential projections on its circumference.

9. (Original) The rechargeable battery of Claim 8, wherein the plastic sealing element completely surrounds the projections.

10. (Original) The rechargeable battery of Claim 9, wherein the contact element comprises circumferential depressions on its circumference.

11. (Original) The rechargeable battery of Claim 10, wherein the plastic sealing element completely fills the circumferential depressions.

12 (Original) The rechargeable battery of Claim 1, wherein at least one of the supporting surface and the housing wall comprise at least one of an additive and a filler to improve absorption characteristics.

13. (Original) The rechargeable battery of Claim 12, wherein at least one of the supporting surface and the housing wall comprises a colored layer which absorbs laser light to improve the absorption characteristics.

14. (Previously Presented) The rechargeable battery of Claim 1, wherein the plastic sealing element comprises grooves for holding the housing wall.

15. (Previously Presented) The rechargeable battery of Claim 14, wherein the plastic sealing element is clamped to the housing wall in a liquid-tight manner using the grooves in the area of an aperture through the housing wall.

16.-19. (Cancelled)

20. (Currently Amended) A rechargeable battery comprising:

a housing having a housing wall, the housing wall having at least one aperture;

at least one cell provided in the housing;

a contact element electrically connected to the at least one cell; and

a plastic sealing element coupled to the contact element, the sealing element provided in the at least one aperture of the housing wall such that there is no open space between the sealing element and the aperture of the housing wall, the sealing element comprising a supporting surface which lies flat against the housing wall at an interface and an adjacent surface extending at substantially a right angle to the supporting surface;

wherein the supporting surface is coupled to the housing wall at the interface; and

wherein one of the supporting surface and the housing wall is at least partially transparent for a laser beam ~~used in a transmission laser welding operation~~ and the other of the supporting surface and the housing wall is absorbent for the laser beam.

21. (Previously Presented) The rechargeable battery of Claim 20, wherein the contact element is a pole bolt that extends through the housing wall and wherein the plastic sealing element is extrusion-coated on the pole bolt.

22. (Previously Presented) The rechargeable battery of Claim 20, wherein the contact element is a cell connector that connects a first cell to a second cell and wherein the plastic sealing element is extrusion-coated on the cell connector.

23. (Previously Presented) The rechargeable battery of Claim 20, wherein the housing wall is at least partially transparent for the laser beam and the supporting surface is absorbent for the laser beam.

24. (Previously Presented) The rechargeable battery of Claim 20, wherein the supporting surface is at least partially transparent for the laser beam and the housing wall is absorbent for the laser beam.

25. (New) A rechargeable battery comprising:

a housing having a housing wall, the housing wall comprising at least one aperture;

a first cell provided on a first side of the housing wall and a second cell provided on a second side of the housing wall;

a contact element electrically coupled to the first and second cells; and

a plastic sealing element coupled to the contact element, the sealing element provided in the at least one aperture of the housing wall and comprising a supporting surface which lies flat against the housing wall at an interface;

wherein one of the supporting surface and the housing wall is at least partially transparent for a laser beam and the other of the supporting surface and the housing wall is absorbent for the laser beam.